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the X-MEN

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"HOLOCAUST!"

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X-MEN! THE MOST UNUSUAL FIGHTING TEAM OF ALL TIME!

"HOLOCAUST!"

OUR SUSPENSEFUL SAGA SO FAR: THE MYSTERIOUS GEM-HUNTING GENTLEMAN KNOWN AS *EL TIGRE* HAS INVADED THE DARKENED CHAMBERS OF A NEW YORK MUSEUM TO GAIN THE MISSING HALF OF A MYSTIC *MAYAN PENDANT!* AND NOW, WITH CYCLOPS HELD AT BAY AND THE OTHER X-MEN UNCONSCIOUS, THE MEGALOMANIACAL CRIMINAL HAS *JOINED* THE TWO SEGMENTS OF THE GLEAMING AMULET ...TO FIND HIMSELF INSTANTANEOUSLY TRANSFORMED INTO THE EARTHLY RE-INCARNATION OF... *KUKULCAN*, MIGHTIEST OF THE ANCIENT MAYAN GODS... AS AN ASTONISHED *PROFESSOR X* OBSERVES FROM X-MEN HQ MILES AWAY...*

I'VE FINALLY MANAGED TO ADJUST *CEREBRO* TO FOCUS ON THE IMAGE OF *EL TIGRE*... ONLY TO DISCOVER THAT HE HAS BEEN *TRANSFORMED!*

HE'S CHANGED INTO THAT AWESOME GOLDEN FIGURE... ONE WHICH SEEMS TO RADIATE SHEER, UNBRIDLED *POWER*... AND A NAMELESS, UN-SPEAKABLE *EVIL!*

AND, I STILL CANNOT MENTALLY CONTACT THE *X-MEN!* I SENT THEM TO THE MUSEUM TO *STOP* EL TIGRE! CAN THEY HAVE.. *FAILED?*

*OUR SPECIAL *NO-PRIZE NOMINEE* FOR MOST STUPEFYING SYNOPSIS OF THE MONTH!
--SUCCINCT STAN.

EDITING.. STAN LEE
SCRIPT.. ROY THOMAS
ART...WERNER ROTH
INKS.. DICK AYERS
LETTERING...SAM ROSEN
MAYAN HEADDRESSES...
IRVING FORBUSH

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THEN, AS CHARLES XAVIER MANIPULATES THE DIALS OF HIS COMPLEX, MENACE-DETECTING *CEREBRO MACHINE*...

THE GAUGES INDICATE THAT THE STRANGE BEING'S ENERGIES ARE *INCREASING*... MULTIPLYING AT A RAPIDLY-ACCELERATING, *ALMOST UNBELIEVABLE RATE!*

IF THE MAN WHOSE IMAGE I SEE *IS* TRULY BENT ON EVIL... WHAT FORCE ON EARTH COULD *HALT* HIM?

AND, EVEN AS THE PROFESSOR GIVES VOICE TO HIS INNERMOST FEARS, THE SAME THOUGHTS ARE OCCURRING TO HIM WHOM THE WORLD WILL HENCEFORTH CALL... *KUKULCÁN!*

I CAN FEEL MY MENTAL PROWESS *GROWING*... AND NOW, TO IT, IS ADDED PHYSICAL STRENGTH SECOND TO *NONE!*

NEVER CAN ANY MORTAL HAVE KNOWN SUCH AN OVERWHELMING FEELING OF RAW, IRRESISTIBLE *POWER!*

BUT, I AM A MORTAL *NO MORE!* THE ESSENCE OF THE DIVINE *KUKULCÁN* PERVADES MY VERY *BEING!*

NOW, I AM *HE*... WALKING THE EARTH AFTER A *MILLENNIUM*-- COME TO CLAIM THE *GLORY* WHICH ONCE WAS THE MAYAN'S *BIRTHRIGHT!*

UH OH! EITHER EL TIGRE'S COMPLETELY *FLIPPED*... OR ELSE, MANKIND IS IN FOR ITS GREATEST MENACE *YET!*

BUT, NO MATTER WHICH, I'VE GOT TO GET PAST THIS *GUARD* HE HYPNOTIZED, BEFORE HE *GETS AWAY!*

GUARD--YOU'VE GOT TO *STOP* THAT MAN! HE'S LOOTING THE MUSEUM'S *TREASURES!*

NO! I OBEY... ONLY *EL TIGRE!* IF YOU MOVE, I *FIRE!*

HE DOESN'T NOTICE I'VE BEEN SLOWLY INCHING ONE HAND *UPWARD*... AND *INWARD*... TOWARD THE CONTROL STUD OF MY *VISOR!* MUSTN'T MOVE TOO *QUICKLY*--

JUST A LITTLE FURTHER... AND..

NOW!!

=*UHHNNN--!*= HOW--? WHAT IN BLAZES IS GOIN' *ON*--?

PZAP!

THAT *DID* IT! AND, THE SHOCK SEEMS TO HAVE RELEASED HIM FROM EL TIGRE'S *MENTAL DOMINATION!*

I DON'T CARE IF THAT GUY CALLS HIMSELF *EL TIGRE*, OR *KUKULCÁN*, OR *LITTLE MARY SUNSHINE*... I'VE GOT TO *STOP* HIM!

HE JUST PARADED INTO A DIFFERENT *ROOM!* THIS IS MY CHANCE TO CATCH HIM *OFF GUARD!*

MY HEAD... IT'S STARTING TO *CLEAR!* I...

HEY, WHAT THE...? =*MMMFFFF!*=

SORRY, PAL, BUT I'VE GOT NO TIME FOR *PLEASANTRIES!* I'LL CLUE YOU IN *LATER!*

HOWEVER, AS THE MOST POWERFUL OF THE X-MEN RUSHES INTO THE NEXT CHAMBER---

SO...YOU HAVE BROKEN FREE! I *SENSED* AS MUCH... WHEN I LOST MENTAL CONTROL OF THE *GUARD!*

OH WELL, I NEVER *WAS* ONE FOR SNEAK ATTACKS, *ANYWAY!*

ONLY ONE CHANCE...MUST USE AN *OPTIC BLAST..!*

BUT, TO CYCLOPS' ASTONISHMENT...

ZOT!

BRAK!

WITLESS *FOOL!* NO MORTAL CAN HOPE TO DEFEAT A *GOD!*

UNNNH!

MY EYE-BEAMS STRUCK HIS *AMULET*.. AND WERE HURLED BACK AT ME...WITH *DOUBLED FORCE!*

HE IS UNCONSCIOUS... BUT NOT *DESTROYED!*

IT IS AS IT *SHOULD* BE! LET HIM *LIVE*... TO TELL OF HIS *DEFEAT!*

THUS SHALL IT BE WITH *ANY* WHO OPPOSE *KUKULCAN!*

JUST THEN, FROM ANOTHER SECTION OF THE SPRAWLING MUSEUM, ENTER THE COHORTS OF HIM WHO WAS ONCE *EL TIGRE*---

WE HAVE DONE YOUR *BIDDING*, MASTER... THE REMAINING X-MEN HAVE BEEN DEFEATED BY *TRICKERY!*

BUT... *BEHOLD*, TOLOC! EL TIGRE WEARS THE CEREMONIAL DRESS OF AN ANCIENT MAYAN *CHIEFTAIN!* THAT MUST BE THE *PRIZE* HE SOUGHT IN THIS CITY!

AY, RAMON! LOOK HOW IT *GLOWS*... MAKING EL TIGRE'S VERY *FLESH* APPEAR GOLDEN IN THIS GLOOM!

AND THIS *PENDANT*..IT WILL BRING A *KING'S RANSOM* ON THE BLACK MARKET!

UNHAND ME, SPINELESS DOLTS! WOULD YOU SEEK TO LAY HANDS ON A *GOD?*

THE ONE YOU CALL *EL TIGRE* IS GONE *FOREVER!*

NOW *BEGONE*, SLIGHT MEN... BEFORE YOU FEEL THE FULL AND MATCHLESS WRATH OF *KUKULCAN!*

THOK!

OOOOF! HE IS LIKE A MAN *POSSESSED!*

OR, RATHER LIKE ONE WHO WISHES TO CHEAT US OF OUR JUST *REWARD*...

BUT, THAT HE SHALL *NEVER* DO...NOT WHILE TOLOC'S HAND CAN STILL GRASP A *MACHETE!*

SO...YOU STILL DO NOT COMPREHEND MY TRUE *POWER!* YOU SEEK TO RAISE YOUR PUNY WEAPONS AGAINST *ME?*

IT IS *YOU* WHO DO NOT UNDERSTAND, EL TIGRE!

SURRENDER YOUR PRIZED *ARMOR*---AND WE MAY LET YOU *LIVE!* OTHERWISE, YOU *DIE!*

I DON'T HAVE THE FOGGIEST NOTION OF WHAT'S GOING *ON* AROUND HERE, BUT ONE THING'S FOR *CERTAIN*---

IT'LL TAKE AT LEAST A *RIOT SQUAD* TO CALM DOWN THAT CREW!

NOW, REBELLIOUS ONES, BEHOLD--- AND *LEARN!* I HAVE BUT TO GESTURE, *THUS*---

---TO UNLEASH AT YOU THE VERY ENERGY OF THE BLAZING *SUN* ITSELF!

ZZZZZ

THE NEXT MOMENT, TWO STARTLED VILLAINS ARE STRUCK BY AN IRRESISTIBLE WALL OF *HEAT* AND *FORCE*..!

CARAMBA! WHAT SORCERY IS THIS?

UHHNN..!

EL TIGRE SPOKE THE *TRUTH!* THE POWERS OF THE *ANCIENT GODS* THEMSELVES NOW RESIDE IN HIM!

AND, WHILE THE FORMS OF HIS CONQUERED LACKEYS COLLAPSE, SENSELESS, TO THE FLOOR...

THERE IS NOTHING MORE TO BE GAINED *HERE!*

THE MUSEUM IS FULL OF TREASURES WHICH MEN TERM *PRICELESS*---

BUT, THE ONE PRIZE WORTHY OF *MY* NOTICE LIES A CONTINENT AWAY... IN THE VERY LAND WHERE FIRST I GAINED A FRAGMENT OF THE *PENDANT OF POWER!*

THEN, AS IF SENSING INSTINCTIVELY THE FULL EXTENT OF THE AWESOME FORCES AT HIS COMMAND---AS IF ACTING OUT A DRAMA WRITTEN BEFORE THE FIRST *CONQUISTADORS* HAD SET FOOT IN THE NEW WORLD--- THE GOLDEN FIGURE MAKES HIS WAY UNERRINGLY TO THE ROOF OF THE BUILDING, WHERE---

THE POWERS, UNLEASHED BY THE JOINING OF THE TWO FRAGMENTS OF THE AMULET, HAD LAIN DORMANT--- *UNSUSPECTED*---SINCE THE CONQUEST OF THE MAYAS *FOUR CENTURIES AGO*---

BUT NOW, I MUST *REPLENISH* THOSE POWERS---AND *INCREASE* THEM-- BY RETURNING TO THEIR PRIMAL *SOURCE!*

SUCH IS THE DESTINY OF--- *KUKULCAN!*

EL TIGRE CAME TO THIS LAND IN AN AIRPLANE.. THE CRUDE INVENTION OF MORTALS!

BUT, THAT IS NOT FOR ONE WHO POSSESSES THE HARNESSED MIGHT OF THE GOLDEN SUN!

WITH ONE SWEEP OF MY ARM, I CAN LOOSE ENOUGH ENERGY TO FORM A SPHERE OF SHEER SOLAR FORCE

ONE WHICH OBEYS THE MENTAL COMMANDS OF KUKULCA'N!

THE HOUR HAS COME TO RETURN TO SAN RICO.. THERE TO RESTORE THE KINGDOM OF OF THE MAYAS TO ITS ANCESTRAL GLORY!

SPECIAL NOTE FOR SCIENCE STUDENTS: WE FULLY INTENDED TO DULY EXPLAIN JUST HOW KUKULCA'N MANAGED TO CREATE THE SOLAR SPHERE, BUT DISCOVERED TO OUR CHAGRIN THAT SUCH A VEHICLE CAN ONLY BE OPERATED BY MAYAN GODS!.. SORROWFUL STAN-

A REMARKABLY SHORT TIME LATER, IN A MID-WESTERN STATE...

HEY, ALBERT... LOOK UP THERE! IS THAT ONE OF THEM FLYIN' SAUCERS?

I DUNNO, BARNEY... BUT IT SURE AIN'T NO BLAMED FIREFLY! AND, IT'S MOVIN' FAST... REAL FAST!

WHILE, AT THIS VERY MOMENT, AT HIS SCHOOL IN NEW YORK'S WESTCHESTER COUNTY, PROFESSOR X IS STRIVING TO CONTACT HIS MISTREATED MUTANTS ---

THE MENTAL POWERS OF EL TIGRE KEPT ME FROM CONTACTING MY X-MEN! BUT, CEREBRO INDICATES THAT HE HAS NOW DEPARTED FROM THE AREA---

THEREFORE, BY A CONCERTED EFFORT, I SHOULD BE ABLE ONCE AGAIN TO REACH THEM TELEPATHICALLY! AND REACH THEM I MUST...

THE SAFETY OF THE ENTIRE WORLD MAY BE AT STAKE!

AH... I HAVE LOCATED ONE OF THEM! THEY MUST HAVE BEEN UNCONSCIOUS UNTIL NOW!

AND, INDEED, IN A DARKENED HALLWAY IN ONE PART OF THE SPACIOUS MUSEUM ---

UNHHH!: MY HEAD...! IT FEELS LIKE SOMEBODY'S STOMPIN' THROUGH IT WITH TRACK-SHOES ON!

WELL, THAT'S WHAT I GET FOR LETTING MYSELF BE TRIPPED UP BY ONE OF EL TIGRE'S LITTLE PLAY-MATES!

ICE-MAN! YOU MUST FIND YOUR FELLOW X-MEN --- THERE'S NOT A SECOND TO WASTE!

RIGHT AWAY, PROFESSOR... IF I CAN STAND UP, THAT IS!

BEFORE LONG, IN THE PREHISTORIC SECTION OF THE BUILDING ---

IT'S ANGEL! BUT, HE'S LYING SO STILL! COULD HE--?

NO! HE'S STIRRING! HE WAS JUST OUT COLD!

OOOHH---

THEN, AS THE HIGH-FLYING MUTANT REGAINS HIS SENSES ---

THIS DART COULD'VE BEEN TIPPED WITH POISON, INSTEAD OF A SLEEPING DRUG! YOU'RE A LUCKY GUY, ANGEL!

YEAH, SURE!.. I JUST HOPE I CATCH UP WITH THE CHARACTER WHO CLIPPED ME, SO I CAN THANK HIM IN PERSON!

WELL, LET'S GET MOVING---, WE GOTTA FIND HANK AND SCOTT!

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SOON, GUIDED BY THE MYSTERIOUS TELEPATHIC PROWESS OF *PROFESSOR X*...

THOSE CHARACTERS IN A *HEAP* OVER THERE... ARE THEY EL TIGRE'S *CRONIES?*

BEAST! SO YOU'RE UP AND AROUND, TOO! IS *CYKE* HURT BAD?

ONE QUERY AT A *TIME*, LADS!

CYCLOPS APPEARS TO BE MERELY *DAZED!* AS TO THE IDENTITY OF THOSE TWO, YOUR SUPPOSITION IS AS GOOD AS *MINE!*

I'LL EXPLAIN *LATER*, X-MEN! NOW, DEPART AT ONCE FOR *RENDEZ-VOUS POINT C!* LEAVE THE UN-CONSCIOUS PAIR FOR THE *POLICE!*

YOU KNOW, UNDER THE CIR-CUMSTANCES, I'M RATHER RELIEVED THAT *MARVEL GIRL* IS ATTENDING *COLLEGE!* THIS WAS HARDLY OUR *FINEST HOUR!*

BRIGHT AND EARLY THE NEXT MORNING, AFTER THE WEARY X-MEN HAVE PIECED TOGETHER THE PREVIOUS NIGHT'S OCCURRENCES---

..THE LOVELY *JEAN GREY* RECEIVES AN URGENT PHONE CALL AT *METRO COLLEGE*...

WHY...HELLO, PRO-FESSOR! I WAS PLANNING TO *WRITE* YOU LATER TODAY!

WHAT? MAYAN HISTORY AND *LEGENDS?* OF COURSE--- I'LL DO WHAT I *CAN!*

STRANGE THAT HE DIDN'T CONTACT ME BY *MENTAL TELE-PATHY!* OR PERHAPS... HE NO LONGER CONSIDERS ME A MEMBER OF THE *TEAM!*

THUS, SHORTLY THEREAFTER, WHEN THE COLLEGE LIBRARY OPENS...

JEANIE GREY... AS I LIVE AND *BREATHE!* HOW'S MY FAVORITE CO-ED?

OH, GOOD MORN-ING, TED! IF YOU MEAN *ME*, I'M *FINE!*

THAT BOY *WITH* TED--- IT'S *CALVIN RANKIN*... WHOM THE X-MEN FOUGHT AS *THE MIMIC!**

SHH! *QUIET*, PLEASE!

* AND FIGHT THEY *DID*.. IN X-MEN #19-- *REDUNDANT STAN.*

JEAN, GAL, I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET AN ACQUAINTANCE OF MINE, *CAL RANKIN!* STARTED SCHOOL THIS SUMMER, TOO!

I'M GLAD TO MEET YOU! BUT.. I HAVE THE STRANGEST FEEL-ING THAT WE'VE MET SOME-WHERE *BEFORE!* HAVE WE?

I..DON'T *THINK* SO, CAL! UNTIL RECENTLY I ATTENDED A SMALL, ER, PRIVATE SCHOOL--- AND I KNEW EVERYONE *THERE!*

HE DOESN'T RECOGNIZE ME... BECAUSE PROF-ESSOR XAVIER REMOVED HIS *MEMORY* OF OUR ENCOUNTER! AS THE *MIMIC*, HE KNEW ALL OUR *SECRET IDENTITIES!*

I DON'T CARE *WHAT* SHE SAYS... I KNOW I'VE SEEN HER *BEFORE!* AND, I WON'T REST TILL I REMEMBER *WHERE!*

WE WERE JUST HEADING FOR THE *CAF*, JEAN! CARE TO SPLIT A CUP OF *JAVA* WITH US?

I'M AFRAID I *CAN'T* RIGHT NOW, TED! BUT, I WOULDN'T MIND A *RAIN CHECK*..

IT'LL BE RAIN-ING AT *EIGHT* TONIGHT... AND I'LL PICK YOU UP *THEN!*

I HOPE YOU'LL BOTH BE *VERY HAPPY!* NOW, WILL YOU PLEASE KEEP YOUR VOICES *DOWN?*

APPROXIMATELY TWO HOURS LATER, AT THE APTLY-NAMED *PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS...*

THE STOLEN PENDANT WAS FOUND *HERE*, IN THE CENTRAL AMERICAN NATION OF *SAN RICO*... THAT IS OUR ONLY CLUE THUS FAR!

AND *THAT* SURE ISN'T MUCH TO GO ON!

IF I KNOW THE *PROFESSOR*, IT'LL BE *ENOUGH*...

JEANIE! TALK ABOUT SIGHTS FOR SORE *EYES!*

SAME HERE, BOBBY! I'VE MISSED THE WHOLE *BUNCH* OF YOU!

HELLO, JEAN! FORGIVE ME IF I SOUND UNDULY *CURT*.. BUT, HAVE YOU THE *BOOKS* I REQUESTED?

YES, PROFESSOR! LUCKILY, METRO COLLEGE HAS A LARGE COLLECTION OF WORKS ON *PRE-COLUMBIAN AMERICA!*

I JUST NOTICED... *SCOTT* ISN'T PRESENT! COULD SOMETHING HAVE *HAPPENED* TO HIM?

NUTS! SHE'S STILL GOT A THING FOR *CYCLOPS* ...JUST AS I ALWAYS *SUSPECTED!*

AH... *HERE'S* THE INFORMATION I WAS SEEKING!

EH? BEG PARDON, SIR... BUT I NEVER IMAGINED THAT EVEN *YOU* COULD FULLY DIGEST SUCH A VOLUMINOUS TEXT IN MERE *SECONDS!*

THERE WAS NO *NEED* FOR SUCH A MENTAL FEAT, HANK! THE WORK IS HEAVILY ANNOTATED, AND I MERELY LOOKED IN THE *INDEX* FOR SOME MENTION OF THE PENDANT STOLEN FROM THE MUSEUM!

ACCORDING TO AUTHORITIES, AN OLD MAYAN MYTH SAYS THAT AMULET IS *ENCHANTED*... THAT IT WILL GRANT THE WEARER THE AWESOME ATTRIBUTES OF *KUKULCAN*, THE FEATHERED-SERPENT GOD..

"BUT, LEGEND ALSO TELLS OF A DEADLY *CURSE* ON THE PENDANT... AND OF A TIME, CENTURIES AGO, WHEN MISUSE OF ITS DIVINE POWERS LED TO A HOLOCAUST OF *VIOLENT UPHEAVAL...* "

"PROBABLY, ARCHEOLOGISTS CLAIM, THE BASIS OF THE STORY WAS A *VOLCANIC ERUPTION*, WHICH SHOWERED THE MAYAN CITY WITH TONS OF *MOLTEN LAVA!*"

ONE CAN HARDLY BLAME MEN OF SCIENCE FOR *REJECTING* THE ANCIENT LEGEND OF A MAN WITH THE POWERS OF A GOD! STILL, IN VIEW OF WHAT *CEREBRO* SHOWED ME, I THINK WE HAD BEST MAKE AN IMMEDIATE TRIP TO *SAN RICO!*

THAT'S FINE WITH US, PROFESSOR! BUT, CAN *CYKE* MAKE THE TRIP?

CYCLOPS? IS..THERE ANYTHING *WRONG* WITH HIM?

DON'T GET *TOO* UPSET, LADY! SCOTTY'S A *BIG BOY*, NOW!

THANKS FOR THE *COMPLIMENT*, ANGEL---

... FORTUNATELY, I POSSESS A CERTAIN DEGREE OF *IMMUNITY* TO MY OWN *OPTIC BLASTS!* I ONLY WISH EVERYONE *ELSE* DID!

SCOTT! I'M OVERJOYED YOU'VE *RECOVERED* SO QUICKLY!

SO AM *I*, CYKE... AND YOU KNOW I *MEAN* IT!

HE'S *ALL RIGHT!* IF ONLY I COULD GO *WITH* THEM---

I ALWAY FEEL MORE SECURE WITH YOUR *EYE BEAMS* BEHIND ME IN BATTLE, SCOTTY BOY!

THANKS, ALL OF YOU! NOW, WE'D BETTER BE GOING! WE HAVE A DATE... WITH A *MAYAN DEITY!*

MINUTES LATER, AS THE FIVE MALE MUTANTS LIFT OFF, SCOTT SUMMERS MAKES A MOMENTOUS **DECISION**...

I THOUGHT I COULD LOVE JEAN IN SILENCE **FOREVER**... BECAUSE OF THE MENACE OF MY DEADLY **EYES**!

BUT, TODAY.. SOMEHOW... I COULD SENSE THAT SHE CARES FOR **ME** AS MUCH AS I DO FOR **HER**..

..AND, IN THAT SPLIT SECOND, I KNEW THAT... AS SOON AS THIS MISSION IS ENDED..NOTHING ON **EARTH** WILL KEEP ME FROM **TELLING** HER HOW I FEEL!

HOWEVER, THAT FATEFUL MISSION IS **FAR** FROM ENDED... AND, A FEW HOURS AFTERWARD, OVER THE LUXURIANT WILDS OF **SAN RICO**...

AN **AIRPLANE**.. FLYING TOWARDS THE DEEPEST PART OF THE **JUNGLE**... THE SAME DIRECTION FROM WHICH CAME THE CALL OF... **KUKULCA'N!**

AND NOW, BY WAY OF EXPLAINING THE PUZZLED PEASANT'S CRYPTIC STATEMENT... AS WELL AS SNEAKILY RECOUNTING THE DOINGS OF OUR DIABOLICAL DEMIGOD SINCE HIS COLORFUL DEPARTURE FROM NEW YORK... LET'S TURN THE CLOCK **BACKWARD** A FEW HOURS, AS...

IN THE SPACE OF A FEW HEARTBEATS I HAVE REACHED MY FINAL **DESTINATION**... NOT FAR FROM WHERE, AS EL TIGRE, I FIRST DISCOVERED THE FABLED **PENDANT OF POWER!**

AH... EVEN AS I **WILL** MY SPHERE OF SOLAR ENERGY TO **DISSOLVE**, I BEHOLD THE TRUE AND ULTIMATE **SOURCE** OF ALL MY POWERS!

THERE... WHERE THE SUN'S BEAMING RAYS ARE **REFLECTED**, IS THAT WHICH SHALL RESTORE THE MAYAN KINGDOM TO **GREATNESS**... AND GIVE IT MASTERY OVER THE **ENTIRE WORLD!**

THEN, WITH A DRAMATIC GESTURE OF HIS MIGHTY HANDS, THE GOLDEN FIGURE UNLEASHES FORCES WHICH UPROOT THE STRONGEST OF TREES AS IF THEY WERE THE MEREST **TWIGS** AND...

AT LAST... MY ONCE-MORTAL EYES GAZE UPON THE GIGANTIC STELA WHICH ONLY **LEGENDS** HAVE DARED TO MENTION! BUT, SOON, A **PLANET** WILL PAY HOMAGE TO THE SIGN OF THE **PLUMED SERPENT**.. SACRED SYMBOL OF **KUKULCA'N!**

FOR, **NOTHING** CAN STAND AGAINST THE UNENCUMBERED POWER OF.. THE **SOLAR STONE!**

NEXT, TURNING HIS ATTENTION TO THE ONCE-PROUD MAYAN *PYRAMIDS* WHICH SURROUND THE IMPOSING IDOL, THE GOLDEN DEMIGOD RIDS THEM OF CENTURIES OF *OVERGROWTH*...

SWOOSH!

IN A PASSING *MOMENT*, I SHALL RESTORE THIS HALLOWED PLACE TO ITS FORMER *SPLENDOR!*

CAN ANY HUMAN.. ANY *NATION*... HOPE TO STAND AGAINST SUCH MIND-STAGGERING *MIGHT?*

AND, WHEN THE LAST REMNANT OF VEGETATION HAS BEEN CLEARED FROM THE ANCIENT COURT...

WOOSH!

THE CITY OF MY ANCESTORS... THE MAJESTIC ALL-CONQUERING *MAYA*... IS NOW FIT FOR *HABITATION!* NOW, IT MUST HAVE *PEOPLE*... CITIZENS OF A NEW AND INVINCIBLE *EMPIRE!*

AND, SO THAT THEY MAY *REACH* THIS CITY... I SHALL BLAST A PATH TO THE *SEA*, CLEARING A ROAD COVERED WITH THE DUST OF *YEARS!*

THEN, TAKING HIS PLACE UPON A BEJEWELED THRONE ON WHICH HAVE SAT COUNTLESS MONARCHS OF OLD, KUKULCÁN AWAITS HIS *SUBJECTS*...

THE *SOLAR STONE* ABSORBS THE RAYS OF THE GOLDEN SUN... AND TRANSMITS THEM TO THE *PENDANT OF POWER!* EVEN WHEN THE WORLD IS DARK, ENOUGH ENERGY IS *STORED* FOR ME TO OVER-COME ANY *FOE!*

NOW, AS MY MENTAL CALL GOES OUT, ALL *DESCENDANTS* OF THE GREAT MAYAN RACE WILL BE FORCED TO ANSWER MY IRRESISTIBLE *COMMANDS!*

AND, INDEED, ALMOST AT ONCE, A HYPNOTIC SPELL SEEMS TO GRIP A LARGE PORTION OF THE SAN RICAN *PEASANTRY*... WHO BEGIN, UNCOMPREHENDING, TO TRUDGE TOWARDS THE RESTORED MAYAN CAPITAL...

HURRY, JUAN! THE VOICE OF OUR *ANCESTORS* CALLS TO US... BIDS US COME TO IT! WE DARE NOT *DELAY!*

SI, PEDRO! I.. HEAR IT, ALSO!

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SOON, NUMEROUS PEONS... COMPLETELY UNDER THE SWAY OF *KUKULCA'N*... BEGIN TO WORK MINES ABANDONED DECADES BEFORE, AS THEY SEARCH FOR *GOLD* FOR THE REBORN MAYAN KINGDOM...

HARDER! WE MUST PULL *HARDER!*

SI... FOR THE GLORY OF KUKULCAN ...AND HIS *CITY!*

INDEED, WITHIN A FEW HOURS, EVEN SAN RICAN *POLICE*... SENT TO INVESTIGATE REPORTS OF MISSING PERSONS... HAVE BEEN TURNED INTO MINDLESS SPECIMENS OF THE POWER OF THE *SOLAR STONE*...

..UNREASONING SENTINELS OF A *NEW EMPIRE* WHICH SEEMS TO DEFY *TIME* ITSELF!

BUT, EVEN AS THE GOLDEN-SKINNED DEMIGOD PONDERS HIS NEXT ACTION, THE SUPER-ENDOWED *X-MEN* ARRIVE IN *SAN RICO*...

THE PORTABLE *CEREBRO* IN OUR JET INDICATES THAT OUR QUARRY IS SOME MILES *UP-RIVER* FROM HERE-- AND, I'M POSITIVE HIS *MENTAL POWERS* WILL PREVENT ME FROM CONTACTING YOU!

WE'LL DO OUR *BEST*, SIR!

THAT'S WHAT I LIKE IN A DEPUTY LEADER... *ORIGINALITY!*

THEREFORE, YOU MUST FACE KUKULCA'N... ON YOUR *OWN!*

ON OCCASION, WARREN, YOUR *SUBTLETY* IS EQUALED ONLY BY YOUR *PUNGENT WIT!*

THEN, IN URGENT HASTE, A MOST UNIQUE *EXPEDITION* IS OUTFITTED, AS...

..REMEMBER, ALL OF YOU, THE FREEDOM OF THE *WORLD* MAY BE AT STAKE! THERE MUST BE NO *DISSENSION* AMONG YOU!

THERE *WON'T* BE, PROFESSOR! I *PROMISE!*

I KNOW MY *EGO'S* JUST HURT BECAUSE JEAN PREFERS *CYKE* TO *ME*..

BUT, I'LL GET *OVER* IT!

SLIDE THAT LAST CRATE *DOWN*, BOBBY, AND LET'S *GO!*

I..WANT TO *APOLOGIZE*, SCOTT, FOR GETTING OUT OF *LINE* A COUPLE OF TIMES TODAY!

SILENCE HAS NEVER BEEN ONE OF MY SHINIER *VIRTUES!*

FORGET IT, WARREN! I *DO* COME ON A BIT LIKE *GOODY TWO-SHOES* SOMETIMES!

I'LL BUY THAT! GIVE 'ER A *SHOVE*, BEAST!

NOW THAT YOU TWO HAVE REJOINED EACH OTHER'S *FAN CLUBS*, MAY A FELLOW X-MAN SUGGEST THAT WE *COMMENCE* OUR PERILOUS PILGRIMAGE?

I STILL CAN'T GET USED TO GOING ON MISSIONS WITHOUT *JEANIE!* WILL SHE EVER BE ABLE TO REJOIN US *PERMANENTLY?*

I... *WE* ALL HOPE SO, BOBBY... FOR *MANY* REASONS!

FOR ONE, I WISH WE HAD HER TELEKINETIC POWER TO USE AGAINST *KUKULCA'N!*

...WHICH BRINGS UP A PERTINENT *PONDERING* OF MINE! IS THE FREEDOM OF THE ENTIRE PLANET *TRULY* IN DIREST JEOPARDY?

YES, HANK! FOR, OUR FOE'S *AMBITION* AND HIS *POWER* SEEM EQUALLY *LIMITLESS!*

BEFORE LONG, AS THE MOTOR-DRIVEN DUGOUT REACHES A *NARROW POINT* IN THE TORTUOUS RIVER ---

I STILL DON'T GET IT! WHY COULDN'T WE JUST LOCATE EL TIGRE'S LITTLE HIDEAWAY BY *AIR*---AND *PARACHUTE* ONTO IT?

DON'T FORGET FOR A *MINUTE*, BOBBY---OUR ENEMY IS NO LONGER MERELY *HUMAN!* WE MUST SIZE UP THE SITUATION BEFORE WE ATTACK!

SUDDENLY, WITHOUT WARNING...

RROWRR!

WH..? A *JAGUAR!* IS KUKULCA'N SENDING *ANIMALS* TO FIGHT US NOW?

HE *CAN'T* BE... OR ELSE HE WOULD SURELY HAVE SENT THEM IN *HORDES*.. NOT *SINGLY!*

I PROPOSE THAT WE POSTPONE THE ACADEMIC QUESTIONS TILL *LATER*---

JUST NOW IT MIGHT BE MORE PROPITIOUS TO SEE ABOUT *DEFENDING* OURSELVES!

I DON'T ESPECIALLY WANNA *HURT* THIS OVER-GROWN PUSSYCAT...

ROWRRR

...BUT, MY *ICE FORK* WILL KEEP HIM AT BAY ONLY *SO LONG!* AT THIS POINT, I WOULDN'T BE TOO PROUD TO ACCEPT A BIT OF *RAPID ASSISTANCE!*

THEN, WITH THE DAZZLING SPEED OF A SWOOPING *FALCON*---

I DON'T KNOW WHERE *QUICKSILVER* IS..* BUT WILL *I* QUALIFY IN THE *INSTANT RESCUE* DEPARTMENT?

MATTER OF FACT, YOU JUST *MIGHT!*

YOU DO, THOUGH, IF YOU READ *THOR #134*... AND DIDN'T *BLINK!* ..CROSS-REFERENCE STAN.

SNARRL

ROWRRR

SORRY, KITTY, BUT YOU'D JUST HAVE GOT *COLD TEETH* FROM BITING OUR POPSICLE PAL *ANYWAY!*

THANKS, ANGEL! MAYBE THAT FREE TRIP'LL *COOL HIM OFF!*

BUT, THE DELAY HAS COST US PRECIOUS *TIME*---AND, WITH EACH SECOND, THE DANGER FROM KUKULCA'N BECOMES *GREATER!*

MAYBE SO.. BUT I WAS GLAD FOR A *BREAK!* I WASN'T MEANT TO BE COOPED UP IN A *DUGOUT!*

YOU'D BETTER REJOIN US, ANGEL! WE DARE NOT BE *SEPARATED*...BY *ANY* DISTANCE!

ALL RIGHT, LEADER MAN.. BUT I WON'T *LIKE* IT!

FOR, HOW CAN I EXPLAIN TO ANY *EARTHBOUND* BEING---EVEN A *MUTANT*--- THE INDESCRIBABLE JOY OF *FLYING?*

THIS IS WHY I WAS BORN! TO *SOAR*...TO FEEL THE AIR RACING BY MY *WINGS!*

A SHORT TIME LATER, AS THE UNIQUE BAND DRAW EVER *NEARER* THEIR ULTIMATE DESTINATION ...

UH OH! SO MUCH FOR THE *SMOOTH SAILING!* LOOK *AHEAD!*

AND, HERE COME A PREDATORY PAIR OF *CAYMANS*.. OR, *'GATORS*, TO YOU LESS LITERATE LAYMEN!

RAPIDS ... AND WE'RE ALMOST ON *TOP* OF THEM!

THIS BOAT'LL NEVER MAKE IT *THROUGH!* GET READY TO *HIT!*

THEN...

THERE SHE *BLOWS!*

KRAAK!

WARREN... GRAB *HANK* AND *BOBBY!*

SAVE YOUR CONCERN FOR *ICEMAN*, GROUP! THE BEAST SHALL PERSEVERE *ALONE!*

YIPES! I NEGLECTED TO TAKE THE *CAYMANS* INTO CONSIDERATION IN MY CALCULATIONS!

SPLOING!

BWOING!

KLOMP!

HOWEVER, NECESSITY IS INDEED THE MOTHER OF INGENIOUS *INVENTION!* THUS, *PRESTO*... HE'S A *STEPPING STONE!*

ICEMAN'S OKAY... SO THAT JUST LEAVES *YOU* TO NURSEMAID, SCOTTY!

YOU FORGET THAT I COULD HAVE *RAY-BLASTED* OUR REPTILE FRIEND... AND I'M NOT A BAD *SWIMMER!*

JUST THE SAME, WAIT'LL I GET MY HANDS ON THAT NUTTY *KUKULCA'N!*

WHY COULDN'T HE HAVE HIS HEADQUARTERS IN *NEW YORK*, LIKE ALL THE *SENSIBLE* DO-BADDERS?

MOMENTS LATER, AS THE MUTANT MARVELS REGROUP ON *SHORE*...

WE MUST BE NEAR HIS BASE OF OPERATIONS *NOW*, BEAST... SEE IF YOU CAN *LOCATE* IT!

I'D SEND UP *ANGEL*-- BUT HE MIGHT BE *SPOTTED* MORE EASILY, FLYING AROUND!

FEAR NOT, PEOPLE! THE NOBLE *BEAST* SHALL BRING HIS HAWKLIKE POWER OF SIGHT TO BEAR ON THE SITUATION!

HMMM... I CAN'T BE *POSITIVE*, LADS... BUT I THINK OUR TOILSOME TREK MAY BE VIRTUALLY AT AN *END!*

THERE.. NOT A THOUSAND FEET AWAY... A MAN-MADE *ROAD*, LEADING TO SOME *MAYAN PYRAMIDS!*

ALL RIGHT, BEASTIE... YOU'VE *GOT* THE PART! NOW, C'MON *DOWN!*

ALAS, CONVERSATION IS A *DYING ART* AMONG TODAY'S TEMPESTUOUS YOUTH!

HANK.. *WATCH OUT!*

STILL, I SHALL MAKE THE DESIRED DESCENT.. IN MY OWN INIMITABLE *FASHION!*

THAT *VINE* YOU WERE SLIDING ON ---IS A *BOA CONSTRICTOR!*

OOPS!

I SINCERELY HOPE THAT IT'S *"BE KIND TO DUMB MUTANTS"* WEEK IN SAN RICO!

BUT, THE EQUALLY SURPRISED SERPENT DOES NOT ATTACK, AND SO ---

HANK WAS POINTING IN *THIS* DIRECTION!

SAY, DO YOU HAVE THE SENSATION THAT WE'RE BEING *SPIED ON?*

YES, BOBBY... BUT DON'T LOOK AROUND!.. IT'S *THEIR MOVE!*

MEANWHILE, IN THE RECONSTRUCTED MAYAN *CAPITAL*...

ALL GOES *WELL* ---ACCORDING TO *PLAN!* ALREADY, I HAVE OBTAINED NUMEROUS *LABORERS*... AS WELL AS ARMED *POLICE*, FORCED BY MY WILL TO *PROTECT* MY KINGDOM!

BUT, THAT IS MERELY THE *BEGINNING!* EVEN AS I STAND THUS, MY POWER IS *INCREASING!*

SOON, I SHALL EXTEND MY DOMINION OVER ALL OF *SAN RICO* --AND THENCE OVER *ALL* OF CENTRAL AMERICA!

JUST THEN, KUKULCAN'S RHETORICAL REFLECTIONS ARE INTERRUPTED, AS...

SIRE... *LOOK!* OVER THERE.. IT IS THE *SIGNAL!*

THEN, *INTRUDERS* HAVE ENTERED MY SACRED REALM! INTRUDERS WHO ARE *UNCONTROLLED* BY MY MENTAL POWERS!

IT CAN ONLY BE THE *MUTANTS* I FOUGHT BEFORE! IF SO, THEY SHALL NOT FIND ME SO *MERCIFUL* THIS TIME!

A FEW MINUTES LATER, AS THE X-MEN REACH THE *EDGE* OF THE JUNGLE ---

THERE'S THE UNPAVED *ROAD* THAT HANK SAW! BUT, I DIDN'T KNOW THERE *WERE* ANY LARGE HIGHWAYS IN THIS AREA!

THERE *AREN'T!* THE ROADWAY MUST HAVE BEEN CLEARED BY OUR *FOE!*

AND, FROM THE *LOOK* OF THINGS, I'D SAY IT WAS *BLASTED* INTO PLACE... WHICH OUGHT TO GIVE US SOME IDEA OF KUKULCAN'S AWESOME *POWERS!*

PERSONALLY, I'VE NEVER BEEN PARTICULARLY *SKEPTICAL* OF THEM!

THE NEXT SECOND, AS THE UNDAUNTED TEENAGERS STEP INTO THE *CLEARING* ---

FWIISH!

A *PIT*... COVERED WITH GRASSES! AND A HEAVY MESH *NET*... FALLING ONTO US! CAN'T *FLY*..!

HE MUST HAVE THEM SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE *AREA!*

AS A DEPUTY LEADER, I MAKE A GOOD *DOG-CATCHER!*

WATCH THE *HAND* THERE, WARRY, BOY!

COULDN'T SEE... TO GRAB A *HANDHOLD!*

I LED THE X-MEN.. RIGHT INTO KUKULCAN'S *TRAP!*

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AND, EVEN AS THE STARTLED MUTANTS LAND ON THE BOTTOM...

UH OH! DON'T LOOK NOW, BUT WE'VE GOT COMPANY!

INDIANS... AND, THEY'RE AIMING A DISTINCTLY FORMIDABLE ARRAY OF SPEARS AT US!

ICEMAN... QUICK! FORM YOUR THICKEST ICE SHIELD ABOVE US!

YOU'RE JUST FULL OF LITTLE IDEAS, AREN'T YOU?

INSTANTLY, AS BOBBY CARRIES OUT CYCLOPS' SHOUTED COMMAND...

MISHTEC? MALOC KOTOR... QUETLAC!

MY LATE MAYATHAN* ACCENT IS A TRIFLE RUSTY... BUT I SUSPECT THEY'RE SOMEWHAT DISCONTENTED!

LET'S KEEP 'EM THAT WAY! WE'RE GETTING OUT OUT OF HERE... NOW!

HOW? LIKE THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE?

*MAYATHAN.. ONE FORM OF ANCIENT MAYAN SPEECH! (AS EVERY MAYAN BUFF KNOWS!) ..SCHOLARLY STAN.

THEN, THEIR ACTIONS HIDDEN FROM THE MENACING ABORIGINES BY THE TRANSLUCENT ICE BARRIER, THE X-MEN DIG OUT...

KLAP!

FOLLOW ME... AND HURRY! IN THIS HEAT, THAT ICE WON'T HOLD OUT LONG... AND MY PLAN DEPENDS ON THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE!

I KNOW YOU DON'T WANT TO HURT THE INDIANS, CYKE... BUT COULDN'T I AT LEAST PUT A COUPLE OF 'EM IN THE DEEP FREEZE?

WHY, BOBBY, THERE SEEMS TO BE A SANGUINARY ASPECT TO YOUR NATURE! FOR SHAME, LAD!

TOLOR! NOTLOC MIPOCA?

BUT, I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY ANGEL KEEPS SNAPPING BACK AT EVERYTHING I SAY... HE'S NEVER BEEN LIKE THAT BEFORE!

I HATE TO SOUND LIKE A POOR MAN'S HAWKEYE, BUT I CAN'T SEEM TO STOP MYSELF! WHY SHOULD JEAN PREFER SCOTT OVER ME?

COULD IT BE THAT HE SOMEHOW SENSES MY FEELINGS FOR JEAN... AND THAT I INTEND TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THEM?

A FEW MOMENTS LATER, AFTER CREEPING UP STEALTHILY BEHIND THE CONFUSED INDIANS...

NOW... PULL!

THERE... CLIMBING OUT OF THE PIT SHOULD KEEP OUR SPEAR-WIELDING BUDDIES OCCUPIED FOR A LITTLE WHILE!

REMIND ME TO TELL KUKULCAN WE DIDN'T CARE FOR HIS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE GREETING!

FLIPP!

AIEEE! MOLTEC CATLI!

FINALLY, AT 4:03 P.M. (EASTERN STANDARD TIME, NATCH)...

A POLICEMAN... OBVIOUSLY ONE OF THOSE WHO MYSTERIOUSLY VANISHED INTO THE JUNGLE BEFORE WE ARRIVED...

NUTS! WHEN ARE WE GONNA RUN INTO SOMEBODY WE CAN REALLY FIGHT?

YOU'LL GET YOUR WISH SOON ENOUGH, ICEMAN!

HMMM... THERE WOULD APPEAR TO BE A NEED FOR SOME SORT OF DIVERSIONARY TACTICS HERE!

SECONDS LATER...

ALL RIGHT, HANK... LOOKS LIKE *WE'RE* THE LIKELY CHOICES FOR THE FIRST *ASSAULT WAVE!*

ALAS, SUCH AN HONOR IS NOT WITHOUT ITS *LESS APPEALING* ASPECTS!

MANUEL.. OVER THERE! *STOP* THEM!

HOWEVER, BEFORE THE MENTALLY DOMINATED GUARDS CAN *FIRE*...

ZAK!

BWOK!

UNNNH..!

MY *RIFLE*... SOME POWERFUL FORCE JOLTED IT FROM MY *HANDS!*

THEN, AS THE EMBATTLED HUMANS FLEE BEFORE THE *MUTANT ATTACK*...

HALT, WITLESS DOLTS! FIGHT TO THE *DEATH*--- FOR YOUR *DIVINE MONARCH!*

TO NO AVAIL... THEIR *FEAR* OVERCOMES EVEN THEIR MENTAL *SUBSERVIENCE!* I SHALL DEAL WITH THE INTRUDERS... *MYSELF!*

WIISH!

PZAP!

Y'KNOW, KUKU, OLD BUDDY... I WAS KINDA *HOPING* YOU'D SAY THAT!

I *MISSED,* BLAST THE LUCK! I THOUGHT MAYBE I COULD GET THAT INFERNAL *PENDANT* AWAY FROM HIM!

IMPUDENT *CLOD!* DO YOU EXPECT SO EASILY TO BEST *KUKULCÁN?*

BUT, THE AMULET SEEMS TO HAVE GIVEN HIM A *SIXTH SENSE,* AS WELL!

'IZ

FZZ

WELL, IT SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA AT THE *TIME!*

FLEE WHERE YOU *WILL!* ERE LONG, ONE OF MY *SOLAR BOLTS* MUST END YOUR COWARDLY FLIGHT!

AH, GOOD OLD *ANGEL!* HE'S ATTRACTING OUR FEARSOME FOE'S UNDIVIDED *ATTENTION,* JUST AS WE PLANNED!

AND, THE MOMENT FOR ME TO *UTILIZE* THAT DIVERSION IS... *NOW!*

BUT, TO THE BEAST'S *AMAZEMENT*---

THE AMULET'S FLARING UP... *BLINDING* ME!

OF *COURSE,* MORTAL! THINK YOU THAT ANY HUMAN CAN WREST THE PENDANT OF POWER FROM ITS RIGHTFUL *WEARER?*

KRAK!

UHNNN..!

I WAS A FOOL TO FEAR THESE INSOLENT MUTANTS! THEY ARE NO MORE THREAT TO MY SUPREMACY THAN ANTS!

BUT, EVEN AS THE MAYAN DEMIGOD SPEAKS...

ANTS, HUH? C'MON, CYKE...LET'S SHOW HIM JUST WHAT IT MEANS TO TANGLE WITH THE X-MEN!

RIGHT YOU ARE, ICE-MAN!

NOW THAT THE OTHER HOMO SAPIENTES HAVE FLED, WE CAN LAUNCH A FULL-SCALE ATTACK! BUT, APPROACH WITH CAUTION!

CAUTION'S FOR THE BIRDS, LEADER MAN...AT LEAST WHILE THAT FEATHER-TOPPED FUEHRER'S ZEROIN' IN ON THE BEAST!

YOUR CONCERN IS PROFOUNDLY APPRECIATED, LITTLE BUDDY!

I SENSE ANOTHER MUTANT... RUSHING AT ME!

BRAK!

OHHHH...! HE'S SUDDENLY GIVING OFF TREMENDOUS HEAT! MUST GET AWAY!

BAH! I GROW WEARY OF THIS POINTLESS BATTLE! WHY DO YOU NOT SURRENDER?

THE X-MEN NEVER SURRENDER, PAL! SO GET USED TO THE IDEA!

WHO DO I THINK I'M KIDDIN'? NOBODY COULD STAND AGAINST THAT GUY EXCEPT ANOTHER GOD... AND THOR I'M NOT!

A FEW SECONDS LATER, AS A WEARY ICEMAN SLUMPS NEAR THE GLOWING SOLAR STONE...

I..I FAILED! MUST REST.. TO RENEW MY ICE POWER!

ANGEL'S KEEPING KUKULCA'N OCCUPIED... FOR NOW! BUT...I WONDER...

AND, SCRAMBLING UP THE GIANT STELA ON A SUDDEN HUNCH, HANK McCOY DISCOVERS...

JUST AS I SURMISED! IT'S COMPOSED OF THE IDENTICAL MINERAL AS THE PENDANT!

AND, IT'S RED-HOT!.. ABSORBING SOLAR ENERGY, IF I DEDUCE CORRECTLY!

THEN--IT MUST BE EL TIGRE'S POWER SOURCE!

IF ONLY I CAN COVER IT WITH ICE, MAYBE WE CAN BEAT 'IM YET!

IT'S WORTH HAZARDING AN ATTEMPT, LAD! I'LL GIVE ANGEL A HAND!

THEN, MOMENTARILY LEAVING BOBBY DRAKE'S SIDE, THE ANTHROPOID X-MAN RETURNS TO THE FRANTIC FRAY NEARBY...

KEEP OUR GOLDEN-TONED GLADIATOR *BUSY*, ANGEL! MAKE HIM EXPEND ALL THE SOLAR BOLTS YOU *CAN!*

I DON'T QUITE SEE *WHY*, BEAST-- BUT *WILL DO!*

JUST GANG-WAY AND WATCH ME *DIVE-BOMB* THAT COSTUMED CREEP!

BUT, EVEN AS THE HIGH-FLYING ANGEL PREPARES TO ZOOM DOWNWARD---

FINALLY MANAGED TO SNEAK AROUND *BEHIND* KUKULCA'N! AND NOW, I'VE NO CHOICE BUT TO USE THE *FULL POWER* OF MY OPTIC BEAMS!

SO...THE WINGED MUTANT SEEKS TO ATTACK ME FROM *ABOVE* ONCE MORE!

BUT, MY *SIXTH SENSE* HAS AGAIN FOREWARNED ME!

SUDDENLY, A MICRO-SECOND LATER... *DISASTER* STRIKES!

T-HAK!

SCOTT'S *EYE BEAMS*.. CAN'T *DODGE..!!*

ANGEL... *STAY BACK! NO!!*

HAH! ONE OF THE FOOL'S OWN FELLOW *X-MEN* HAS SEALED HIS *DOOM!*

AND, AS THE SEVERELY STUNNED WARREN PLUMMETS TO THE GROUND...

HE TOOK THE *FULL BRUNT* OF MY STRONG-EST OPTIC BLAST! IT COULD HAVE BEEN *FATAL*...

HE'S STILL *BREATHING*.. HE'S *ALIVE!* BUT, FOR *HOW LONG!*

HOW *TOUCHING!* IGNORING YOUR *OWN* SAFETY, YOU RUSH TO THE AID OF YOUR BADLY WOUNDED *FRIEND!*

THUS, IT IS ONLY FAIR THAT YOU *JOIN* HIM...IN *DEATH!*

UNNNH..!

T-HOOM!

AND THEN, EVEN AS THE SENSELESS FORM OF *CYCLOPS* FALLS...

ONLY TWO MUTANTS *REMAIN!* AND, ONE OF THEM TRIES TO ISOLATE THE SOURCE OF MY POWERS WITH *ICE!*

IF HANK WAS *WRONG*, IT'S CURTAINS FOR *ME!*

WHAT..? THE SOLAR BOLT FALLS *SHORT!*

THAT MUST HAVE BEEN THEIR *PLAN*--- TO TRICK ME INTO USING ALL MY ENERGY AT A *RAPID RATE!*

BUT, I STILL POSSESS ENOUGH MIGHT FOR ONE FINAL, STONE-SHATTERING *BLAST!*

I SHALL *SHAKE* THE INFERNAL MUTANT FROM HIS LOFTY PERCH--- AND THEN *DESTROY* HIM!

FZAP!

HOWEVER, THE NEXT SECOND, AN OMINOUS THUNDERING SHAKES THE VERY *FOUNDATIONS* OF THE MAMMOTH PAGAN STELA, AS---

THE BEGINNINGS OF A *TREMOR!* I'M BETTIN' THAT OUR POWER MAD PLAYMATE DIDN'T BARGAIN ON *THAT!*

HIS LAST SOLAR BOLT MUST HAVE STRUCK SOME SORT OF *EARTH FAULT* UNDERNEATH THE CITY!

RUMBLE!

NO---IT CANNOT *BE!* MY DREAMS OF A RESTORED MAYAN EMPIRE *CANNOT* END THUS! I SHALL NOT *LET* THEM--!

SUDDENLY, AS THE YOUNGEST OF THE FABULOUS X-MEN LEAPS FROM HIS PRECARIOUS PERCH---

THE FEATHERED-SERPENT IDOL--- IT'S STARTING TO CRACK! IT'S BREAKING UP!

LIKEWISE, I MIGHT APPEND, IS THE FLOOR ON WHICH IT REPOSES!

IT THEREFORE BEHOOVES US BOTH TO MOVE WITH PRECIPITOUS HASTE!

ALMOST INSTANTANEOUSLY, WITH A DEAFENING ROAR, THE COURT BETWEEN THE CRUMBLING PYRAMIDS IS TORN ASUNDER---

---AND THE MYSTICAL, ONCE-DREADED STELA PLUNGES INTO THE YAWNING ABYSS, TO BE SEEN ---NEVERMORE!

AND THEN, HAVING TAKEN MOMENTARY REFUGE IN A VIOLENTLY VIBRATING TREE, THE BEAST AND ICEMAN OBSERVE THE MIGHTY FISSURE CLOSE---

YOU KNOW, BOBBY BOY, IT'S INDEED FORTUNATE THAT MERE SUPERSTITION IS BENEATH THE CONSIDERATION OF THE SCIENTIFIC MIND!

OTHERWISE, ONE MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO EXPOSTULATE THAT THE ANCIENT CURSE IS ONCE AGAIN OPERATIVE!

ALL I KNOW IS, THIS WHOLE CRUMMY CITY'S COMING DOWN AROUND OUR EARS!

AND-- LOOK! THERE GOES KUKULCÁN, RUSHING INTO THE STONE TEMPLE ATOP ONE OF THE PYRAMIDS!

RRUUMM

THAT'S SCARCELY THE SAFEST OF SANCTUARIES! HE MUST HAVE PANICKED!

AND SO, IT'S UP TO THE BOUNDING BEAST TO EXTRICATE OUR FEARFUL FOE---I HOPE!

WHUMP! THUNK!

ANXIOUS INSTANTS LATER...

HELP ME..!

DESIST FROM YOUR SUPERFLUOUS EXCLAMATIONS, FRIEND! YOU'RE RESCUED ALREADY!

HERE...HOP ONTO MY ICE SLIDE, QUICK!

NOW THERE'S AN EXHORTATION TO DELIGHT THE EARDRUMS!

WE'D BEST SCAMPER TO SAFETY AT ONCE! A STRAY SOLAR BOLT SEEMS TO HAVE IGNITED A VERITABLE INFERNO!

THEN, REACHING A NEARBY VANTAGE POINT---

WHEN THE IDOL WAS SWALLOWED BY THE EARTH, OUR BUDDY HERE TURNED BACK INTO PLAIN EL TIGRE! HOW DO YOU ACCOUNT FOR THAT, BEASTIE?

AS THE BARD SAYS, THERE ARE MORE THINGS IN HEAVEN AND EARTH, ETC!

ALAS, POOR KUKULCA'N--- I KNEW HIM, BOBBY-O!

I'M SORRY I ASKED! LET'S FIND CYKE AND ANGEL!

BEFORE LONG, WHEN THE PAIR LOCATE THEIR MISSING COMPANIONS---

KUKULCA'N WAS OVERCONFIDENT.. HIS BLAST MERELY STUNNED ME!

I--SOMEHOW CARRIED WARREN FROM THE CITY.. BUT HE'S HURT--- BADLY!

ANGEL--- HE'S SO STILL! IS HE..?

NO--HE'S.. ALIVE!

WHAT HAPPENED? DID KUKULCA'N GET TO HIM?

HOWEVER, BEFORE THE EXHAUSTED SCOTT SUMMERS CAN ANSWER, THE WOUNDED ANGEL RAISES HIS HEAD SLOWLY, PAINFULLY, AND---

IT WAS---CYCLOPS! HE STRUCK OUT AT ME--- ON PURPOSE!

BUT..I DIDN'T! YOU KNOW I DIDN'T!

WHY WOULD I HAVE BLASTED YOU DELIBERATELY?

BECAUSE OF--- MARVEL GIRL! YOU--LOVE HER--- TOO!

UHHH---!

HE'S PASSING OUT AGAIN!

THEN, TURNING FROM THE BLEAK, FLAME-SCORCHED REMNANTS OF A MADMAN'S NIGHTMARE, THE WEARY X-MEN DEPART---AMIDST A STRANGE AND OMINOUS QUIET---

ANGEL WAS RAVING--- DELIRIOUS! SURELY THE BEAST AND ICEMAN KNOW THAT!

AND YET---THEY DON'T SPEAK! AND, THEIR VERY SILENCE ACCUSES ME!

COULD IT BE THAT WARREN WAS PARTIALLY RIGHT---THAT, SUBCONSCIOUSLY, I DID WANT TO ELIMINATE---A RIVAL?

HOW CAN I PROTEST MY INNOCENCE TO THE OTHERS... WHEN I'M NO LONGER SURE OF IT MYSELF?

NEXT ISH: THE MIND-STAGGERING MIMIC RETURNS! 'NUFF SAID?

MINUTEMEN

Blunt

Brian Azzarello